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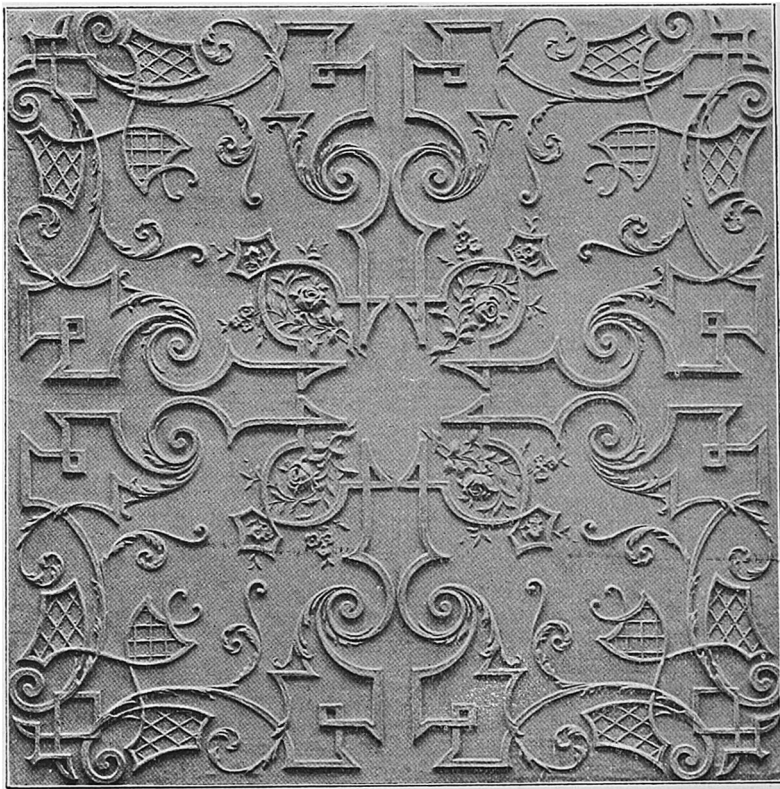
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DESIGNERS' JOTTINGS

CEILING, DESIGNED AND
MODELLED BY JAMES BAIRD
FOR 'CORDELOVA'
DECORATION



DESIGNERS' JOTTINGS

I CUT the following from the *Sunday Sun* :—

'Further particulars are now to hand concerning the coming lace combine. The Lace Curtain Manufacturers' Association has now been registered. Including debenture powers the capitalisation will be about £2,000,000. During the negotiations for the formation of this combination, at least two extensions of the date for the completion of the contracts have been given by the promoters, but the latter now express satisfaction at the response from the trade. The Ayrshire makers are stated to have gone into the association practically *en masse*. There have been some difficulties as regards Nottingham makers, arising chiefly from the fact that in that city there are many very small makers of lace curtains who go direct to the retailers; but, generally speaking, it has been decided not to include these concerns in the combination. The response by the big Nottingham concerns included in the association is that of Carey and Company, Limited. It is stated that the association will have friendly working arrangements with its chief suppliers of yarns, namely, the Fine Cotton Spinners' and Doublers' Association. It is also stated that the Lace Dressers' and Finishers' Association, recently formed with a capital of £1,000,000, will have a working arrangement with the Lace Curtain Manufacturers' Combination.

In one or two cases one branch of Nottingham lace concerns will go into the last-named association, and another branch into that of the Lace Dressers' Company. Among the chief firms in the last-named are Messrs. Thos. Adams and Company, M. Jacoby and Co., and Hamel and Wright, all of Nottingham.'

A correspondent, writing about the lace combine, says :—'I do not think many of the Nottingham firms would join. . . . The effect of a combine in the lace trade would, I am afraid, be a loss to the shareholders; at the same time, it is "an ill wind that blows no one good." The good that would come out of it in this case would be the cleansing of the trade from impurities; no doubt for a time it would cause great excitement, but afterwards I think things would run the better for the oiling. . . . I am of opinion that combines are just what is wanted to promote individual enterprise, and, as far as lace is concerned, would eventually do a great amount of good by weeding out old machinery and doubtful firms, pirates, etc., who only exist to cut prices, as a well-known manufacturer remarks. The position of the designer *proper* would be improved; as there would be more competition in designs, the imitators would naturally go to the wall. In times of prosperity every second mother's son takes up the charcoal, and the trade gets choked up with incompetents who make splendid pirates, but little else.' My esteemed correspondent's

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remarks are sometimes rather paradoxical, but he is an exceptionally keen judge of the lace trade; and, at all events, he leaves us in no doubt of the fact that he considers the lace designer of to-day, as a body, calls for some very drastic reformation.

This is *apropos* :—

'BOUND FOR ZION CITY.

'NOTTINGHAM LACEMAKERS TO LEAVE FOR DR. DOWIE'S HOME.

'The village of Beeston, distant about three miles from Nottingham, is at the present time in a state of great excitement.

'Many family ties and life-long friendships are about to be broken during the present week, when a number of lacemakers leave the village for Liverpool, en route for America. They go to the City of Zion which Dr. Dowie has established in Illinois State, U.S., to teach the inhabitants of the "sinless city" the art of lace manufacture.

'They are all skilled workers, and number about 25. They are chiefly draughtsmen and designers, and are being paid handsomely, some as much as £10 per week.

'They are under a three years' contract, and some of them are taking out their wives and families, with a view to permanently settling in Zion City.

'They were preceded, about six weeks ago, by a quantity of the most up-to-date machinery, dispatched from England. They entered into their contracts at the time the machinery was sent off, and have been in receipt of wages ever since.'

And this is interesting, though it relates, of course, to hand-made lace, an art which rarely requisitions the aid of the professional designer :—

'THE LACEMAKERS OF ESSEX.

'The *Laily* recently published a charmingly-written article, which has been noticed in a great number of our leading commercial papers, on the tambour lace industry of that old-world Essex township, Coggeshall, and its neighbourhood. It seems to have come as a surprise in many usually well-informed quarters that the art of lacemaking has not died out in England except in the Honiton and Buckinghamshire districts. Unfortunately the Coggeshall industry is fast dying out, owing to foreign competition, and—let us say—the need of influential society ladies to befriend it and make the beautiful hand-made lace as fashionable as it ought to be. We remember days when the lace industry in Coggeshall was fairly prosperous, and the tambour frame brought in many a welcome shilling to the labourer's wife in the rural villages round about. Some years ago a well-known Q.C. and his wife took a considerable interest in the Essex lace, and introduced it to many of their fashionable friends, with the result that for a time there was quite a little boom in the place. Coggeshall people's hopes rose high, but, alas! the effort died away, and we fear that foreign competition has now finally set its heel on the little industry. Still, if any of our readers, says *Commercial Intelligence*, wish to secure some really beautiful English hand-made lace, we have no doubt that they can be supplied in Coggeshall. We hope they will.'

A friend of mine was told the other day by a prominent wall-paper manufacturer that during the last twelve months he had had upon the average six parcels of designs per diem submitted to him, and said he, pathetically, 'We look through a good lot of them, but we rarely look at any if we don't know the designer well.' This, of course, sends wall-paper designers poste haste to the textile manufacturers, but little more satisfaction is there to be gained.

An old friend, a calico-printer—not, by the way, in the combine—says it has been wearisome to him for many years past to look through the bundles after bundles of poorly-executed and wretchedly-conceived designs that it is the lot of every manufacturer of to-day to have submitted to him. Not only was it wearisome, but painful to a degree to have to be constantly shutting the door in the face of these well-meaning but utterly incompetent aspirants, whose fault is that they have allowed themselves to be deluded into the belief that design for manufacture offered a field of illimitable possibilities, and that a school training was all the equipment needed to enable them to grasp the prize. He hailed the combine—although not a member—as a means of automatically crushing these incompetents out of the field and making things pleasanter for the legitimate designer, whom, he was kind enough to say, it was a pleasure to meet.

A correspondent writes :—'Dear I.B.,—You ask how we in "Cottonopolis" find business. Well, we neither find it, nor does it find us—for there is no business; it has gone and I don't know where. The cause? Firstly, too much combination (or association, or what you like to call it) has frightened buyers; secondly, in the cotton trades, the price of raw material has had, and will have, for some time to come, a very depressing effect.' (*Copper*, for instance, is now 11d. per lb. as against a normal price of 7½d.; this means the investment of 50 per cent. more capital on machine-printed goods; no wonder printers try to wait 'for something to turn up.'—I.B.) 'Let us take the calico-printing first, as being of most interest to me. At one time, Portland Street, Moseley Street, etc., were thronged with busy and prosperous people, and the huge warehouses and offices hives of activity; and now? Well, let us enter any one of the great buildings, what do we see? Practically nothing, no stacks of printed goods, no porters or packers, no clerks, no anything; but dust and dullness, where used to be brightness and business. If one accidentally unearths the gentleman who should buy designs, his very look is enough to send one train-haste away from Manchester to some less gloomy clime, say Paris, where designs and designers are evidently wanted badly, to judge by the amount of Parisian work one sees about. Things are almost as miserable in the wall-paper trade. There, it is not foreign competition which has tired the trade, but too much having things their own way; the result for the designer, though, is practically the same as in the cretonne trade. Dull! deadly dull!! and but little to expect for some years to come. Yours, U. D.' (*Does this stand for 'Unknown Designer'?*)

'£334,000 and no profit. Such is the story of the Calico Printers' Association. £201,000 of this sum goes to the vendors for interest until the completion of purchase. The balance of £100,000 is carried forward "in view of the uncertain trade outlook." Happy vendors. Unhappy shareholders.'—*Sunday Sun*.

The Combine in the linoleum trade is only—compared with the larger ones—a very partial affair. A correspondent, writing of it, says :—'I cannot say that it has had much effect on the linoleum trade generally, as only two firms are concerned, and again, owing to the War, trade has been so unsettled since the Combine was formed. But with regard to its effect on designers. It has taken a big buyer out of the market, and there is no longer the rivalry between the two to stimulate buying. I don't think it will have any effect in raising or lowering the standard of design. As there is an arrangement between all the linoleum firms as to prices for goods, their price-lists remain the same.'

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Among such an obstinate people as the British, *one* consequence of a wall-paper combine was inevitable. It appears, last month, in the report of the first general meeting of the shareholders of the 'Free Wall-Paper Company, Limited.' From this report we see that the Chairman of the Company is Mr. W. Hadden Owen: the Secretary, Mr. Armstrong; and that the Great Northern Mills at Louth, Lincolnshire, have been secured as the base of operations. Here, machines—sanitary and surface—and other plant have been laid down, and managers, etc., engaged, with all the materials and appliances necessary to the manufacture of wall-paper; and by now, if the Chairman's prognostications have been justified, the machines must be in full swing. So far for the production—the Chairman goes on to speak of the sale of the productions. 'With regard to a market for our goods, we stand in our opinion in a most advantageous position. The circumstances of the wall-paper trade are such as to afford us very great facilities for effecting a large sale and at very remunerative prices; that should enable us, trading in an ordinary sound way, *and not being loaded with heavy unremunerative capital*, to pay large dividends to our shareholders. I may say we already have orders of a very substantial amount which we shall supply as soon as we commence running. In addition to that, we have very numerous applications from firms who, as soon as we can get our pattern books ready, are anxious to deal with us. We have also applications from many substantial firms wishing to take up agencies for us and to sell in various parts of the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The facts all convince your directors that we shall have a ready sale for all the paper that we can manufacture.'

The United States wall-paper combine, which had a capital of 38,000,000—dollars, I suppose, but I cannot just lay my hands on my authority—has, I am informed, 'bust-up.' (That expression seems appropriate.) My recollection is that one of the businesses which was bought into the combine at the price of \$45,000 was, after the collapse, bought back by the original proprietor for \$8,000. I am open to correction, as I speak purely from memory, but such a transaction seems to throw a lurid light upon the financial methods of some of these large flotations.

I see that Italy and Montenegro have signed a copyright convention for the mutual protection of literary and artistic works. A little something of this sort would not be lost between, say, England and the United States, or even the Continental Powers.

From time to time one comes across striking examples of methods of development in design. An interesting one has just been brought to my notice. 'The Studio' for September gives, on page 262, an illustration of a design for wrought-iron gates and railings, by Mr. James A. Jones of the Birmingham School of Art, highly commending it for, amongst other qualities, its freshness of treatment. We published in these columns last February some designs by Mr. A. Harold Smith, a well-known metal-work designer, for cast-iron railings, which were then in process of manufacture by the Falkirk Iron Co. The resemblance between Mr. Jones' design, published in September, and Mr. Smith's, published in February, some eight months earlier, is remarkable. At the time of publication of Mr. Smith's designs they were much praised for their general elegance and simplicity, and for the refinement and novelty of the details, sections, etc.—I remember special attention was drawn to the swelling and tapering of the verticals and to the subtle little curves at their points of attachment to the horizontals, features which were considered to be not only easy of production in cast work, but especially suited for it. So far as the *drawing* in 'The

Studio' goes, Mr. Jones appears to have used these features with considerable success, whether they will be quite easy to work in wrought-iron, I will not say. A comparison of Mr. Jones' design for railings with the lower design on page 339 of the February ARTIST will explain my meaning. In the way of resemblance, note the blunt heads above the top rail, the finish to and arrangement of the panels, the sections and tapering of the verticals, already spoken of, and the shields of leaf work. Mr. Smith is believed to have introduced this peculiar arrangement of leaf work, and uses it for both cast and wrought-iron; but he treats it differently in the two methods. I have no doubt he will be sincerely gratified to learn that the thought and labour he put into these designs has had so much influence on current School of Art design. Mr. Jones' design, I note, obtained a National Bronze Medal in the National Competition, no doubt for its originality and 'freshness of treatment.'

The lecture upon 'Design in the Future,' by Mr. Philip H. Newman, R.B.A., etc., Vice-President of the Society, was delivered, as announced, in Clifford's Inn Hall, on the 20th November, before a large and representative audience. The lecturer dealt with his subject in most scholarly and lucid manner, the speculative flights indulged in being led up to by most comprehensive surveys of design in the past and present. At the close there was a long and most interesting discussion, in which the President (who occupied the chair), Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A., Mus., Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A., M.V.O., Honorary Member of the Society, Mr. Jacques, Mr. Stephen Webb, Mr. William Hornibrook, Mr. Hamilton Jackson, and others took part.

Mr. George C. Haité, R.B.A., etc., President of the Society of Designers, has been elected a Vice-President of the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts. The election, I am given to understand, has been made not only as a personal recognition of Mr. Haité's long and valued services on the Council of the S.E.F.A., but as a consequence of his official connection with the Society of Designers, it being the custom of the S.E.F.A. to bestow their Vice-Presidencies on the Presidents of other kindred literary and artistic societies.

Mr. Haité has also been elected President of the Nottingham Atelier Club, of which Mr. Tom Browne, R.B.A., and Mr. Wm. Kiddier are Vice-Presidents. The inauguration of a new era has been marked by the coalition of the two important Nottingham Artistic Clubs—the Atelier and the Nottingham Society of Artists—for the purpose of holding a periodical sketching night, after the manner of the London Sketch Club; to form a Nottingham Sketch Club, in fact, of which I understand Mr. Charles Holme, the accomplished proprietor and editor of *The Studio*, has accepted an honorary membership. Several prominent members of the London Club, including Mr. Tom Browne, hail from the lace centre. The Director of the Nottingham City Museum, Mr. G. H. Wallis, F.S.A., is an honorary member of both the Nottingham clubs above mentioned.

We have our C.I.V., Mr. H. Spencer Stromqvist, safely back again; and before these lines appear in print the Society will have held a little social function at the Inn by way of welcome, at which he will be the honoured guest of the evening. The campaign has done him good; he is looking bigger and stronger than ever. I wish we could say the same of another fellow-member who went out nearly a year ago—last January, to be correct—Mr. A. Underwood. The last I heard from him was from Bloemfontein in April—his letter is dated 30th March—when he was in the midst of the great doings of

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that time. The War Office can afford us no information regarding him; I believe he went out in some medical capacity. If this should meet the eye of any of his friends, I need hardly say that his fellow-members would be grateful for any communication.

I am able to announce, since our last issue, the election to membership of the Society, of Mr. J. Mowbray Jeffrey, of Burslem, Mr. F. W. Wheeler and Mr. Walter H. Ferry, of London, and Mr. C. H. Temple, of Ironbridge, Shropshire.

On 19th February Mr. Hamilton Jackson will read a paper on design in connection with stained glass; tickets may be obtained free on application to the Honorary Secretary of the Society of Designers, Clifford's Inn, London, E.C., who will also be pleased to supply enquirers with information respecting the Society.

I. B.



A STENCILLED CHRISTMAS CARD
BY G. R. RIGBY

NOTES

THE following is a suggested Jubilee Tribute for 1901, to be held at the Imperial Institute, as a fitting memorial to the late Prince Consort, for the purpose of establishing a record of 50 years' progress in the art of design, and is from the pen of Mr. A. Jonquet, the well-known designer. The past 50 years marks an epoch in the rise and advance in the industrial arts of Great Britain at the close of the 19th century, and the suggested Institute would commemorate what this country owes to the noble founder of the great Exhibition of 1851, and the instigator of the South Kensington Museum, monuments of his untiring zeal and energy, bequeathed as a testimony of his love and patriotism to the English people. The Albert Institute of Design, and Record Office, enclosing a permanent gallery of creative art, represented by scheduled specimens of British design and manufacture executed during this period, embracing those of Colonial designers and manufacturers, useful alike to teachers, art students, and craftsmen. Rooms of the Gallery to contain examples from the three greatest designers of the last 50 years of the 19th century. For example: Alfred Stevens, Room A,

designs and works; Burne-Jones, Room B, designs and works; Harry Rogers, Room C, designs and works; including the creative works of Royal designers who desire to honour the memory of an illustrious Prince and benefactor.

Harry and Alfred Rogers were amongst the foremost designers of their time who contributed to the success and glory of the '51' Exhibition by the many beautiful carvings and designs which adorn the rooms in the Palaces of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, as well as those of other public institutions. Their compositions were of the Renaissance style, and closely allied to the Grinling Gibbons school.

The Royal Academy revenue to the nation represents £300,000 annually, and creative art, such as decorative leathers, papers, and textiles, £26,000,000, not including metals or other artistic subjects.

It was chiefly owing to the great influence and personal efforts on the part of that honoured designer, the late Lord Leighton, P.R.A., that the designs of the late Alfred Stevens received Academic recognition many years after his death, the finest specimen of which was lately erected in St. Paul's. This English Michael Angelo, as he was called, died in want, unappreciated, neglected and abandoned by his countrymen, to their lasting discredit; whilst they removed and without shame pulled down the last landmark of his genius—those telling lions in bronze, seated in triumph on the finials of a small handrailing—which formerly surrounded the British Museum. Was this piece of vandalism inspired from a spirit of selfish jealousy, or the outcome of a restless craving (offspring of our modern civilisation), which, like the schoolboy, is bent on destroying the first thing of beauty that stands in its path.

The late Prince Albert devoted the whole of his valuable life in teaching the English people that the greatest art of all was industrial, and therefore universal. Nevertheless, Burlington House stands exactly to-day as it did in his time, obdurate, and has failed to produce a Cellini, a Michael Angelo, or a Stevens.—From *The Journal of Decorative Art*.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY SCHOOLS

At Burlington House, on Monday, December 10, on the one hundred and thirty-second anniversary of the foundation of the Royal Academy, the prizes and medals were awarded to the successful students of the year by the President, Sir Edward Poynter. As the present is not what is known as a "great" year, when the biennial gold medals are awarded and the President delivers his address, Sir Edward made only a short speech, and the proceedings took place in the Lecture Room instead of the Third Gallery. The presentations, nevertheless, attracted a large audience, and the galleries in which the Creswick landscapes, the painted designs for the decoration of a public building, and the other works were displayed, were thronged an hour before the distribution took place by an appreciative but critical crowd. The Creswick pictures, which entirely filled the Third Gallery, attracted the most attention. Among those who met in this room to discuss the works before the presentation were Professor Herkomer, Mr. J. S. Sargent, Mr. Val Prinsep (the newly-elected Professor of Painting), Mr. Alfred Gilbert, Mr. Marcus Stone, Mr. David Murray, Mr. Thorneycroft, Mr. Gow, Mr. Briton Riviere, and other well-known artists, both inside and outside the Academy.